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6,000–12,000 K: Blue Hour Observatory

Ludwig Berger Lara Mehling

Is there a state of mind or a state of life with a special sensitivity, in which a minimal amount of light suffices for a good life? Or do we even need dark, shaded places to enable certain experiences?

Peter Zumthor, *«Das Licht in der Landschaft»*

The activities of the day correspond to slices of time, and to each slice of time there corresponds one room of the apartment.

Georges Perec, *«Species of Spaces»*

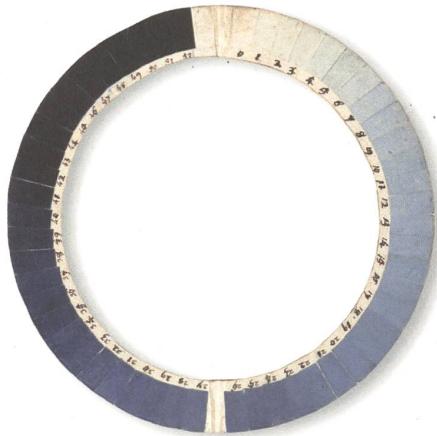


fig. a Saussure's Cyanometer, Bibliothèque de Genève,
Arch. Saussure 66/7, pièce 9

When the sun is well beyond the horizon, post-dusk or pre-dawn, the only light that reaches us from the indirect sun is blue. Twice a day for about 40 minutes we find ourselves in the *blaue Stunde*, the blue hour: a time measured in color and a color made by time. Blue, the color materialized by a fading distance in landscape, also marks the temporal distance between day and night. Blue is the color we see longest and last, up until its eventual fade out into *Eigengrau*—the ‘intrinsic grey’ which we perceive as utter darkness. Inside, our light-flooded spaces eliminate the daily transition from white to blue to *Eigengrau*. By flipping on the light switch we inadvertently turn off shades of blue, the ambiguity between inside and outside, between light and dark. Yet, to resist the urge to push the night away is to experience architectural space as a stage on which the subtle blue color spectrum unfolds and transforms—repainting the interior. Lingering in this twilight hour, we can begin to understand the window as more than a modernist picture frame. Instead, we recognize it as an aperture of spatial blue. While James Turrell elaborated skyspaces and shallow space constructions to capture aerial atmospheres for gallery spaces, we propose that every room may serve as a quotidian observatory for the blue hour.

We wanted to examine the interplay between our everyday spaces and the blue hour—how the gradual change of color and light affects our perception of a room, the surrounding landscape, and ourselves, and vice versa, how the room stages the appearance of the blue hour. Which qualities does a space need to

enable a valuable experience of twilight? These questions led us to initiate an empirical study through which the dimensions of light color, typically measured in lux and Kelvin (light intensity and color temperature), may become readable in human experience. Following Horace-Bénédict de Saussure's *Cyanometer*, an 18th century field instrument designed to measure the intensity of sky blue, we invited ten people to act as *human cyanometers*. Each participant was asked to spend the time immediately after sunset in an unlit room of their own house or apartment and simply to observe the blue hour while sitting in front of a window. Recorded by a clip-on microphone, the participants shared their thoughts and observations with each perceivable shift in the phenomenon outside the window, the atmosphere inside the room, and their personal reactions, associations, and feelings. A still video camera positioned at the back of the room captured the observers' disappearing silhouettes against a patch of blueing and finally blackening sky.

Rather than circulate a survey amongst a group of architects and gather speculations and ideas from directly within the discipline, we chose to cast our net wider, to collect experiences of spatial blue from individuals practicing in related fields. The study group was composed of visual artists (illustrator, photographer, painter), designers (interior, fashion), a stage actor, a performance artist, a sound artist, an art historian, and a Buddhist. The participants' home settings represented a range of levels (from ground to fifth floor), building types (from farmhouse to highrise), and locales (Zurich, Berlin, Alsace). Different sources and intensities of artificial light in the immediate environment and various weather conditions (from heavily overcast to clear skies) likewise resulted in diverse conditions on the day of observation. Despite these quite heterogeneous perspectives and conditions, we could discover a great correlation in the experience of the blue hour. While there was no strict or singular sequence of phases, over time, certain color qualities and atmospheres did emerge and crossfade into one another. Starting with the cloudy grey or colorful, clear sky after sunset, the participants described the emergence of a blue filter, which slowly painted the sky and ground with a glowing light. They then perceived a general shift toward a paler, more monochromatic blue and finally the color's complete disappearance into darkness—or the emergent red-grey, even orange filter of the city lights.

We documented these observations through an audio, visual, and textual timeline. Each of these layers—in the form of a radiophonic composition, sequential video stills, and excerpts from the transcribed audio recordings—reveals a particular aspect of the participants' experience at regular intervals. Moreover, each medium offers a unique *«reading»*. While the sound piece condenses the hour into 24 minutes, acting more as a synthesis in the way that the ten voices come together to form a polyphonic choir, the text is both script and map, offering readers a nonlinear way of following in the participants' footsteps. The story unfolds both vertically and horizontally, tracing either individual journeys or portraits of each blue measure. The video stills correspond directly to the text, giving the readers a glimpse through the aperture.

By experiencing the lights, colors, and atmosphere shifts without artificial light, it became evident that the window is more than a frame, the outside more than a picture. While the inside and outside express diverging physical and mental qualities (comfortable shelter vs. cool wideness), the *«blue filter»* links the room and its view visually into a common space: all visible objects and spaces desaturate equally, lose their depth and blur continuously into the upcoming night, albeit at different

speeds. The blue hour becomes the connecting element between the house and the landscape, blurring the line that divides these spaces. More mental categories than spatial divisions, inside and outside fuse and synthesize their complementary spatial qualities. Our preconceived notion that blue and darkness come down from the sky to the earth was rebutted by the study, which revealed that phenomenologically, the blue hour begins inside the room and then creeps onward and outward to the landscape, finally reaching the sky.

In the perspective of the quotidian observatory, the blue hour becomes a unique spectacle with a blurred beginning and end. It transforms the room and the landscape into a stage, where elements and objects are constantly emerging and disappearing, morphing or fusing together. Specific elements become reference points for the effects of the blue hour: the relational color of a chimney smoke against the background of the sky, the amount of visible detail in a tree's branches, the activity of children playing outside, the perceptibility of objects inside. Even the visibility of one's own body becomes a point of reference: in the course of the blue hour, one body part after another sinks into darkness, seemingly merging with the furniture, while the blue outside remains visible. In fact, the visible body appears to depart before the blue does.

With such experiences, the blue hour provokes a variety of atmospheric and emotional states. Our participants expressed feelings from presence to dissolution, from peacefulness to anxiety, from freedom to loneliness. In the experiment, the blue hour was also a projection space for childhood memories, travel stories, and vivid fantasies, as well as associations with fine art and film. The immediate experience of the blue hour also enhanced non-visual perceptions: the participants expressed a higher sensitivity towards sounds, scents, and body temperature. The less present the visual environment was, the more present the body of the observer became, and the more active and imaginative his or her perception of the surrounding space.

The blue hour calls into question the apparent stabilities and orders of time, space, and object; it activates a lively relationship between body, room, and landscape. What architecture can withstand or even make use of this *«liquidation»* of space? We are used to thinking in terms of *spatial* transitions between indoor and outdoor spaces, but not in terms of the temporal transitions within these spaces, in which all things may undergo a change in color, shape, and presence. A shifting spectacle delights our eyes and alters our physical perception in our otherwise unspectacular, routine spaces. In *«Species of Spaces»*, Georges Perec reminds us that while *«it takes a little more imagination no doubt to picture an apartment whose layout was based on the functioning of the senses»*, it is nevertheless possible.¹ Instead of considering typical apartment rooms, which are determined by their functional use, say a living or dining room, he has no difficulty imagining a *«gustatorium»* or an *«auditory»*, or even the idea of a *«smellery»*, a *«feelery»*, or a *«seeery»*. He also proposes unique thematic arrangements as new organizing principles, such as the days of the week: a *«Mondayery»* might resemble an ocean-like boat with hammocks and seafood stores. With a bit of effort, we can speculate, too: what might a room built specifically for the observation of the blue hour phenomenon look like—a *«Blue Hourery»*?

A special thanks to Jürgen Beck, Johannes Berger, Sarah De Latte, Lea Dietschmann, Isabelle Fehlmann, Lucas Lai, Josef Mehling, and Isabel Prado Caro for sharing their blue-hour observations with us.

¹ Georges Perec, *«Species of Spaces and Other Pieces»*, John Sturrock (ed./trans.), 1997, p. 31.

The sky is very grey.

Outside everything seems very quiet – here, too. You could say that inside the blue hour has started. But outside it still seems very bright.

Die Sonne ist noch nicht ganz untergegangen. Der Tag ist noch so präsent und hier. Er neigt sich langsam.

Während die Objekte, die Bäume, die Menschen hier draussen noch scharfe Silhouetten haben, wirken meine Sachen hier im Raum eher langsam verwirsch, nicht mehr so klar und voneinander trenbar. Aber es gibt noch einen Gegensatz von innen und aussen. Ich am Fenster, ich bin hier drinnen und schaue nach draussen.

There's very little movement outside – it's a very calm time; the fearsome darkness of the night hasn't set in yet.

There's still some light coming up from the bottom of the visible sky – that makes the sky a pale whitish-blue color. And it's nice to be in this room that seems to be just lit up by residual daylight, left over and slowly leaving the space, succumbing to the lengthening shadows.

Draussen ist es noch ziemlich hell, aber es beginnt nun düsterer zu werden. Ich fühle mich ein bisschen wie in einer Höhle, aus der ich rausgucke.

Die Farben werden insgesamt entsättigter, wie durch eine leichte Dunstschicht aus Blau, die sich über alles legt. Und die Wahrnehmung der Landschaft wird zweidimensionaler – es wird alles ein bisschen flacher. Zu wissen dass es draussen jetzt kühler ist, macht das ganze Haus wie zu einer weiteren Schicht von meinem Körper. Und das Fenster zu einem grossen Auge, durch das ich in die Welt schaue.

I don't think the blue hour has started yet. The only clue that I have about the blue hour is the reflection on this metallic building in front of me.

Eine Rose, ausgerichtet zum Hellen. Viele Kakteen, halbseitig beleuchtet. Weisser Himmel. Und drinnen leuchten die Lampen, und ein Schatten, und der Lampenwiderschein am Fenster.

Die Landschaft auf dem Gemälde verschwindet schon. Und hier im Spiegel eines Steins – da ist, glaube ich, der helle Himmel.

I think the sun is not yet all the way below the horizon. At least there is still a lot of light along the ridge in front of me.

Der Himmel ist oben ganz hellblau, weiter unten ganz rosa, und dann ganz unten – soweit ich das erkennen kann – schon ein bisschen blau. Draussen spielen Kinder noch Fussball.

Und jetzt hier, wenn ich in den Raum schaue, dann gibt es einen ziemlich scharfen Schatten in der Ecke.

The blue hour has started. Maybe it's the contrast of the yellow neons in the building in front of me, but everything looks more bluish. The world is less grey, it seems warmer. The sky looks totally calm.

Jetzt hat sie begonnen, die blaue Stunde. Es ist nur noch ganz wenig Orange da, aber eigentlich ist es vor allen Dingen dieses kalte, klare Blau – dieser Filter.

It's almost like a light grey-golden fog that's being pushed down toward the horizon ... And with this lighting, I almost wish the clock were ticking a little slower. Because as the sky slowly changes, there are very few sounds, there is very little movement outside. It seems like everything is being stretched out into the night and thus also like everything is moving a little slower – which makes the clock feel fast.

Es fühlt sich an, als würde das Licht dichter werden und sich durch die Scheibe reindrücken, die sich über alles legt. Es wird jetzt immer anstrengender für die Augen nach draussen zu schauen, und auf der Hornhaut fühlt sich das an wie ein Kribbeln, eine leichte elektrische Spannung.

I suddenly feel colder already, or more aware of my temperature. The room feels very peaceful. I don't have to strain my eyes one way or another to observe the objects.

Ein Uhrenticken – und ein Lachen. Die Rose ist so still.

There is one star between the two buildings in front of me – it's very bright. And the blue has turned a little bit more violet-grey. It's still blue, but there's been a little bit of red mixed into it.

Weiter weg vom Fenster hat meine weiße Bettdecke schon ganz viele Schatten. Sie wird plastisch. Und es gibt noch einzelne Spots von Licht im Zimmer, die wahrscheinlich etwas mit den Reflexionen von anderen Häusern zu tun haben. Man kann eigentlich nicht genau sagen, wie dieses Licht-Schatten-Muster zustande kommt.

Auf der Strasse beginnen die Verkehrslichter orange zu strahlen und immer zu heller werden, während die Schatten immer dunkler werden. Aber selbst in den tiefsten Schatten gibt es noch Zeichnungen, jn den Lücken zwischen den Bäumen.

There is a little mosquito. It's getting attracted by the neon's. The neutral colors, the concrete, are all turning grey or black. And all the black things are disappearing.

Ich sehe schon die ersten Sterne am Himmel.

When I look out of the window to the side, I can see the blue moving toward the horizon ... from behind, from above. I feel it is the beginning of the blue hour and there is a shift in my body, like it no longer feels normal to simply sit here. I feel like I should turn on a light, or else sort of use this energy. I want to feel active in this light.

Das Licht der Strassenlampen und Autos hat etwas von einem künstlichen Wegdränger, von einem angestrebten Versuch, etwas weiter aufrecht zu halten, was eigentlich gar nicht nötig wäre. Hier drinnen hat mittlerweile fast alles seine Farbe verloren. Die Sachen sind schon richtig im Schwarz verschwunden.

Part of me thinks it has started now but I still feel a lot of light. It'd be hard to paint these colors; it would be challenging to convey this lighting to an observer, probably challenging to photograph, also.

Die Katze sitzt vor der Stube am Fenster. Als ob sie sich da wärmen würde am Licht. Der Himmel ist jetzt nicht mehr so weit oben. Draussen könnte man mich nicht mehr sehen.

The gradient in the sky is becoming broader: rather than having the yellow just along the horizon and more of the sky blue, it feels like the yellow light has drifted further up – to meet the blue. [yawning] Above the house in front of me the sky is almost periwinkle – hydrangea blue.

Das Zimmer ist schon wieder dunkler geworden. Es hat etwas von einem eingefrorenen Moment. Alles wird zu einem Stilleben, und man guckt von aussen auf das Leben, das man gerade so führt, mit den Gegenständen.

It's funny to be looking in this direction, because obviously in the other direction is the sunset. And I can see someone in their window taking a picture of it! Someone is looking out the window right now ...

Links ist es schon sehr blau gedeck ... eine Art schweres, dennoch helles Blau. Weniger Leuchtkraft, es ist, als wäre Weiss mit ins Blau gemischt. Ich würde sagen, kein Acryl oder Ölfarbe.

Ich glaube, es beginnt langsam.

The whitish-grey chimney smoke from the beginning is now turning grey-red, darker than the sky. The sky is the continuous color.

Und die einzelnen vorher so gut erkennbaren Konturen der Zeder hier draussen verwischen auch langsam. Die einzelnen Äste werden zu einer Form.

Ich werde immer mehr eingelullt von der Dunkelheit. Es ist ein beruhigendes Gefühl, ein schönes Gefühl, diese Geborgenheit im nicht so ganz Sichtbaren. Man hat nicht mehr den Anspruch alles erkennen zu müssen. Man kann einfach sein. Es sind noch ein paar Kinder draussen.

If I weren't looking at the time every once in a while, it would feel like this moment were sort of frozen, that time doesn't really seem to be passing. Or: even though I see tangible change in the sky, it feels like time isn't playing much of a role in it.

My feeling is that night has started to take over.

The sky is wonderful; it is very blue. Now is the time of freedom. In the room, it seems that everything is falling asleep, closing its eyes, slowly. I feel my heart a little more; I feel that it's going faster – I don't know why.

Ich werde langsamer ei bisschen müde! Aber es ist schön kein Licht machen z müssen, einfach nur hier z sitzen. Ich bin Teil von de Welt hier drinnen und wie i einem Film, schau ich mir draussen an. Es hat etwas sel Entspannende

It feels a bit like disappearing only see my hands and my fe - my feet hardly at all. The low one is already disappearing seems that everything is turnir to be only one thing. Because of the color. The sky is no changing; the blue is leave calm

Ich werde langsam ei bisschen müde! Aber es ist schön kein Licht machen z müssen, einfach nur hier z sitzen. Ich bin Teil von de Welt hier drinnen und wie i einem Film, schau ich mir draussen an. Es hat etwas sel Entspannende

The background of tf objects has become even moi extreme in the sense th: they're no longer discret three-dimensional objec that form a background. Th have blended together into two-dimensional line of objec on my kitchen countertop an on the windowsill – a strip of item

Und jetzt ist es wirklich so dass die Erde sich mehr w. eine dunkle schwere Mass anfühlt ... Und der Himm wirkt dadurch ganz leicht Kontras

The orangy light is slow disappearing. The light now just a light turquoise. I can remember the name of th color ... Periwinkl

Ein Tonkrug. Eine Kastanie. Das weiss ich aber nur, weil ich die vorhin schon gesehen habe. Jetzt sieht es eigentlich aus wie ... Speck. Die Bäume wie eine Kulisse. Die Rose ist ein Punkt. Und der Himmel, der ist jetzt nur noch Hintergrund. Als ob man in einem Ei sitzen würde.

Inside, I am sitting more or less in the dark now, which I didn't feel before. There is something comforting about being inside and looking out. It's maybe the best of both worlds: you are a part of something but you have more possibilities in front of you. And you can see them, but you don't feel locked away by being a part of something.

Everything feels a bit faded, c a little duller. And the blue : the top of the sky has definite become darker, taken on slightly deeper blue. And th yellow's also drifted far beyon the horizon. It's not real glowing anymore; it looks fade or soft and not like a light sour as much as a color ... This kind makes me want me to be a chil again. I think I used to spend c much time just staring at thing

Jetzt fangen die Lichter de Gebäude an mich zu nerven weil sie eigentlich immer gleic strahlen, egal was aussstrüllt Und die Straßenlicht schaffen jetzt Inseln, klein Räume. Früher waren es n Punkte

I guess if I were a creature livi out in the open air without any natural light, I would b running home. Unless I wer a nocturnal creature, in whic case I would be sleeping waiting for the night to com around

Das Rot des Krans wird jet auch vom Blau eingenommen als ob sich über alles ein blau Schleier legt. Es ist schön, wi die Gegenstände, und jetzt sin es insbesondere die Bäume, i die Dunkelheit fallen. Sie werde langsam umhüllt. Irgendw wird alles eingenommen, vo einem Schatten – oder bläue Schimme

e blue hour is coming to an end soon. The sky is turning more purple. I think at this point I really feel alone.

The sky looks brighter and warmer over here and darker over there. And it seems more like the sea over there – it seems deeper. I'm not sure if I am staying too long, but everything seems to be super slow, above. The sky is very purple.

er im Raum gibt es nur noch Konturen. Die Sachen, Objekte – es sind nur noch Ansätze, Schemen. Ich bin auch nur noch ein Umriss. Ich merke, langsam irde ich jetzt normalerweise Licht anmachen. Oder ide werden und einschlafen.

jects have taken on their ghost form; everything looks a bit more like they are at night now ... the blue started to grey, it has blackened with the remnants of light on the horizon to feed this blueness it is the end of the transition to night.

r Himmel ist jetzt eindeutig bläulicher. Die Wahrnehmung luezt sich immer mehr auf die zwei Farbereiche: das himmelblau und das Orange in künstlichen Lichtern. Wie noch zwei Farben auf diesen leichten, die ineinanderfließen, im Teil sich auch sehr scharf ineinander abgrenzen. Aber es anderer ist mittlerweile in Schwarz getaucht. Nur noch diese Flecken von Orange in den grossen Blau.

erything is different shades of grey now. The 'blue hour' – cause there is no yellow sun no black universe yet?

I denke gerade, ich bin die einzige, die jetzt rausguckt. So die wirklich rausguckt. Ich verschwinden auch mehr hier drinnen. Meine Hose ist schon ins Sofa schmolzen.

e blue just got more blue again. Sitting in the dark, I definitely feel a coolness emanating. And it feels like a cobalt blue from the top is not like a light dust drifting sifting down across those color gradients, pushing the low further back.

I habe das Gefühl, der Himmel ist bereit für die Sterne. Es ist schon der Nachthimmel. Es ist ein sanftes Meer. Es tutrade sehr gut, wie auch meine Enttäuschung verschwindet, hier im Raum ... nicht verschwinden im Raum auslöschen, sondern setzt sich zur Ruhe, tritt einfach in den Hintergrund.

e window where there was a window where there was a in taking a photo of the sunset earlier, is now lit up.

wird merklich dunkler. Die Farbe der Bäume tritt zurück. Am Horizont, dort scheint es etwas heller und ob noch eine weitere Farbe zu gemischt wäre.

Das hier drinnen hat keinen Raum für mich im Moment. Es spielt wie keine Rolle. Es ist da, das ist gut, ich bin froh, aber die Hauptrolle spielt das Draussen. Und draussen ist alles immer weniger erkennbar – das Blau, die Bäume, die Wiese, der Berg sind jetzt definitiv dem Grau gewichen. Und damit ist für mich jetzt auch die blaue Stunde zu Ende. Es ist jetzt der Abend, die Nacht, die Dunkelheit ist hier.

There's a strange tension in me, where it's too dark for me to feel totally at ease, in terms of being able to see clearly, yet I am not yet in complete darkness ... I think my aloneness – it's not quite a loneliness yet – is becoming clearer to me.

In der schwarzen Schicht der Landschaft stehen vereinzelt die orange angeleuchteten Häuser – und auch die unbelichteten, leicht blau verschwommenen. Immer mehr Lichter gehen in den Häusern an.

It's starting to become grey and blue. Then inside, dark grey. The curtain almost looks a bit spooky.

Keine Objekte mehr, nur noch Flecken. Ich rieche die Pflanzen. Und die Rose ist weg – nur noch ein ganz, ganz kleiner Punkt. Und es gibt keine Farben mehr.

I don't think the blue hour is over yet. In this room, I can still feel it, sitting in this blue light. [sigh] It is a little weird to know that this is what the room looks like when I'm not home ... or when I am sleeping.

Die Kinder spielen immer noch. Und jetzt habe ich das Gefühl, in den letzten – lustig, man denkt eigentlich gar nicht mehr in Minuten –, also in diesem letzten grossen Abschnitt hat sich gar nicht so viel verändert, es ist einfach dieses leuchtende Blau.

It doesn't quite look blue – it's almost like a grey, a blue-grey.

Der Rauch hat aufgehört zu erscheinen. Vermutlich gibt es wenig Licht, das er reflektieren könnte. Die Bäume sind nur noch Schatten, durch die ich die leuchtenden Fenster sehe. Es gibt eigentlich fast keinen Verlauf mehr im Himmel, zumindest beginnt der Himmel zu einem Richtung Norden ist es nun monochromblau.

OK, now I think it is the purple hour.

[Licht an]

[Light on]

While I was sitting near the window, I was starting to get the sense that the blueness had mostly gone. When I back away, I see that it's still a very blue space. The blueness is painting a sort of exteriority onto the wall that makes it feel like the external wall of a house, like this room belongs more to the night – and I am on the outside. Beyond the glass in the door is the real-inside.

[Licht an]

Ich fühle mich wirklich, als würde ich jetzt einfach nur noch im Dunkeln sitzen. Ab dem Moment, wo es wirklich dunkel ist, wird es irgendwie ein bisschen einsam. Das Blau ist fast mehr einem Dunkelgrau gewichen. Es hat noch einen ganz leicht bläulichen Anteil, aber diese blaue Stunde ist auf jeden Fall vorbei.

The sky has gotten a deep dark blue and dark grey-blue, yet the light is still there – very, very lightly ...

Ich glaube, es ist dunkel: Meine Haut leuchtet nicht mehr.

[Licht an]

The turquoise color is pretty much all gone. The blue, dark blue, is dominating. It's still very, very peaceful – bordering not on fear, but lightly less control, like objects could morph and I wouldn't even notice.

The blue is getting sucked down to the horizon line. I am a little uneasy to be in this space. It feels like this space is showing me what it's like when I'm not here. In fact, I really don't feel so much a part of it anymore.

It's a night blue, it's a blue night sky; it's more a blue-black than a blue-ing of the daylight sky. And it seems to have settled.

The blue hour is now over. The tension has left and the night has truly begun. I get the sense that there'll only be a change of darkness now, not so much a change of color. I feel ready to turn some lights on.

[Light on]

The sky's gotten pretty dark, a deeper blue. The stars: very bright in contrast, very white. It all has a sadness to it, but it's also extremely freezing. I don't know why the act of watching is so freeing ... to not be part of something.

The blue above me has turned a very beautiful Prussian or ultramarine blue. Further east it is a really beautiful dark, dark blue. I am so glad the sky is blue and not another color!

Und jetzt drückt sich von unten wieder ein Rot hoch. Komisch, wie es Dinge gibt, die immer wieder kommen: das Rot, das weggedrückt wurde vom Blau, das dann wieder von unten weggedrückt wird vom Rot – das erste war das Sonnenrot und jetzt ist es das Stadtrot.

Somehow it also feels more like the awakening of the night than the sleeping of the day. It's like a transition, of energy, where it doesn't quite feel like everything is shutting down and going to bed, because as the day ends, the night begins. So the night is arising. It's an in-between state, I guess.

The valley floor feels warmer, actually, where all these businesses are: glowing artificial lights, big strips of yellow and white, points of orange and dark blue and red. Warmer also in knowing that there are people down there, emanating.

Alles geht ganz flüssig ineinander über, auch die eigenen Stimmungen. Aber ich wünsche, es würde alles viel langsamer passieren.

This darkness feels like it's kind of sucking the blue out. And below, the greenish haze is also dirtying the blue, which doesn't feel so clean anymore; it almost feels like it's being squished out in between the growing darkness and the thickening haze.

I think it's dark now. I really think it's night now. [sigh] I think the blue hour is over.

I'm not sure if the blue hour has ended, because it feels correct but maybe with all the light pollution, it's giving me an illusion.

[Light on]

It's hard to read color well in this light. I also see – a star, a single star.

Jetzt ist die blaue Stunde fast gegangen. Es ist mehr ein Grau, worin ein leichenes Blau steckt: Graublau; graublaue Winter.

It feels to me that the blue hour is almost over.

[Light on]

[Licht an]

Ich frage mich, wann der Punkt erreicht ist, wo es nicht mehr dunkler wird. Das orangene Licht legt sich wie ein Filter über alles. Und das Gefühl von einer Umhüllung ist jetzt weg. Am Spielplatz ist es jetzt völlig undenkbar, dass da noch jemand spielt. Die blaue Stunde ist vorbei.

[Licht an]

BEFORE SUNSET
6,000 Kelvin (color temperature)

SUNSET / 0'
6,500 K

5'
7,000 K

10'
7,500 K

15'
8,000 K

20'
8,500 K

21'
9,000 K



500 K

35'
10,000 K

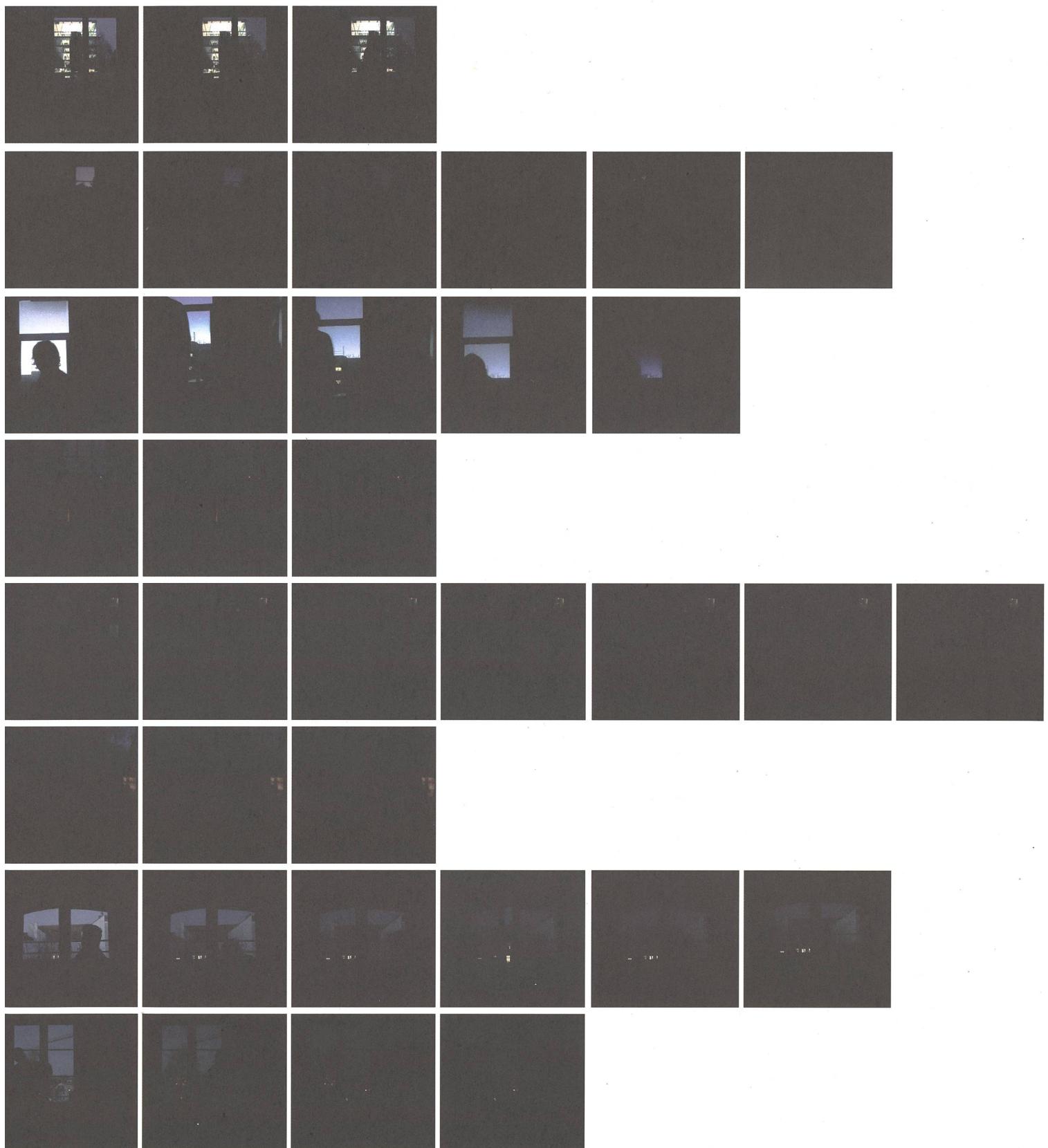
40'
10,500 K

45'
11,000 K

50'
11,500 K

55'
12,000 K

60' / NIGHT
12,000+ K





www.trans.ethz.ch/de/bluehour.mp3

Ludwig Berger is a sound artist and composer. He works on electronic and radiophonic compositions, as well as installations and interventions, exploring dynamic relationships between time and place, landscape and mapping, recording and remembering. Completing a Master's in musicology, art history and literature, he studied Electroacoustic Composition at the Liszt School of Music in Weimar. Since 2015, Ludwig Berger has been working as a research associate at the Chair of Landscape Architecture of Christophe Girot at ETH Zurich, where he teaches sound to architecture students, investigates audiovisual mapping techniques and explores psychogeographic strategies for architecture.

Lara Mehling is a landscape architect. She joined the TheoryLab at the Chair of Christophe Girot at ETH Zurich as a research associate in the summer of 2015 after receiving her Master of Landscape Architecture degree, with distinction, from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD). Upon graduating, she was awarded the Certificate of Merit from the American Society of Landscape Architecture (ASLA) as well as the highest honor from the department, the Charles Eliot Traveling Fellowship. During her graduate studies, Lara Mehling also contributed articles to ASLA's The Dirt while co-founding and editing student publications at the Harvard GSD.

